

# News from Ed Markey

**United States Congress**

**Massachusetts Seventh District**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 16, 2004**

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## **MARKEY URGES FULL-SCALE INVESTIGATION OF CORPORATE PROTECTION MONEY PAID TO TERRORIST GROUPS OVERSEAS**

**Washington, DC** – Congressman Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior Member of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security, today released letters he sent to the Departments of Homeland Security, Justice and Treasury (DHS, DOJ, DOT) and the Inspectors General of DHS and DOJ demanding information on why the Bush Administration failed to investigate a mining company headquartered in Colorado named Echo Bay Mines Limited, until ABC News planned to broadcast information about the case.

Echo Bay's former project manager in the Philippines provided DHS with extensive documentation of the company's financial support of several terrorist groups, including Abu Sayyaf – which is known to be affiliated with Al Qaeda – which Echo Bay provided in exchange for "good community relations," according to company records. Despite this evidence, DHS did not request additional information offered by the former Echo Bay official, and DOJ initially decided not to pursue the matter until the ABC News broadcast was planned.

"Supporting terrorists must never be considered just another 'cost of doing business,'" said Rep. Markey. "The Echo Bay matter raises the possibility that there may be additional mining, oil, gas, and other companies operating all over the world that are knowingly or unwittingly providing material support to terrorists with impunity. The Bush Administration must take strong and immediate steps to ensure that no corporation compromises the security and safety of the American people in order to secure its assets."

The forthcoming May/June 2004 issue of *Sierra* magazine reports that Echo Bay Mines Limited, a Denver-headquartered company that operated the KingKing mine on the Southern Philippine island of Mindanao, first began providing cash, supplies and weapons to Abu Sayyaf, the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), the New People's Army (NPA) and the Lost Command in 1995 in return for "good community relations". Some of these groups had been labeled by the U.S. State Department as terrorist groups in the mid-1990s; however, the article states that Echo Bay continued to meet with, fund and equip these groups even after this took place. The article reports that in September 1997, "security donation expenses" to insurgent groups totaled \$116,914, and a whistleblower - Allen Laird, who is a former employee of Echo Bay quoted in the article - estimated that over the course of the project, Echo Bay paid more than \$1.7 million to these terrorist groups.

U.S. law has prohibited "material support" and "providing something of value" to terrorists since 1994, and the definition of what constitutes such support was expanded in 1996 and again in 2001 as part of the USA PATRIOT Act. According to the *Sierra* article, 57 entities have been charged as of February 2004, but "no mining companies or other non-Arab related enterprises" were among them.

Rep. Markey's letters requests information on:

- Why the Bush Administration chose not to prosecute Echo Bay or seize its assets
- Whether there have been additional cases when U.S. corporate entities provided terrorists with material support for business or other reasons
- What the Bush Administration is doing to determine whether these activities are still taking place, prosecute those who are responsible, and ensure that they do not continue to occur

"A company in the Philippines called it 'community relations.' But it looks more like coddling terrorists. The larger question is how many other companies around the world are engaged in the same sort of behavior, and what the Bush Administration is doing to put a stop to it. The letters I sent today seek answers, and I will continue to push for tough action to choke off funds for terrorists determined to attack our country," Rep. Markey concluded.

Rep. Markey's letters can be found at [www.house.gov/markey](http://www.house.gov/markey)

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